

MINUTES, VA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (VA-FACT) Board of Trustees Meeting, March 13th, 2025

Participation:

Trustees Present: Season Roberts (Chair), Abigail Wescott (Vice Chair), Tarina Keene (Secretary), Virginia Powell, Beverly Crowder, Maureen Coffey, Carl Ayers (VDSS Designee) – joined at 12:28pm

Remote Participating Trustees: Cherie Short (Alexandria)

Trustees Absent: Cindy Han, Tyler Hart, Allison Lawrence

Staff/Guests Present: Nicole Poulin (Executive Director), Michelle L'Hommedieu (Office of Attorney General - FACT Counsel), Taylor Hohle (Senior Research Associate), Lori Crouch (IntegrityInsights) – joined at 11am – left at 11:15am, Jeanine Harper (Greater Richmond SCAN) joined at 1:00 pm.

Opening: Chairperson Roberts called the meeting to order at 10:41 AM. A quorum was present.

Decisions and Actions: The following actions were approved by the Board unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Remote Participation:

- Trustee Short requested to participate remotely due to residing more than 60 miles from the meeting location.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Powell to allow remote participation for Trustee Short. Trustee Coffey seconded.**

Minutes Approval:

- Chairperson Roberts opened the floor for comments and corrections on the previous Board minutes from the December meeting.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Wescott to approve the minutes as presented. Trustee Keene seconded.**

Update on FACT Marketing Strategy: Contractor Lori Crouch provided the update.

- Sonja and Lori met with Taylor and Nicole last week to discuss strategy and develop a preliminary plan
- Lori has developed an interview guide for stakeholders including legislators, community partners, and former board members to get information to help guide a marketing strategy.
- Working on an audit of the website to look at opportunities to elevate messaging.
- Sending a letter to grantees with a request to promote their FACT partnership on social media and in newsletters. Additionally, she will be creating a press release template and media list to help promote FACT's activities.
- Lori is drafting a public relations plan based on the interviews that will continue to be updated throughout the year.
- Trustees can assist the marketing team by taking pictures and providing updates on FACT related activities to promote. They can send these to Taylor to pass along to Sonja.

Chair's Report: Chairperson Roberts provided the report.

- There are currently five board vacancies, and an additional five Trustees who terms end this year, which will be appointed by the Chairperson of the House and the Chairperson of the Rules Committee in the Senate, due to the new legislation that was passed last fiscal year.

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Nicole and Season have been in contact with the staff and have not heard back from either branch of the legislature. There was discussion on various Trustees contacting legislators they have relationships with to move the process along.

- **A motion was made by Trustee Wescott for members of the Executive Committee to develop language for approaching legislators regarding the appointments and the Chair will deputize Board members to utilize the language, on behalf of the Board, when speaking to legislators. Trustee Coffey seconded.**
- A Nominating Committee needs to be established to nominate next fiscal year's officers. The Committee is to be made up of 3 members, one of whom the Chair appoints. This Committee will need to meet virtually before the next Board Meeting on June 12th to select a slate of officers to present to the Board at that meeting.
 - **A motion was made by Trustee Powell to approve the Nomination Committee of Trustee Coffey, Trustee Roberts, and Trustee Wescott. Trustee Crowder seconded.**

Child Abuse & Neglect (CAN) Advisory Committee Report: Trustee Powell provided the committee update.

- The CAN Advisory Committee met on February 25th. At the meeting, they received updates from Eric Reynolds from the Office of the Children's Ombudsman (OCO). The OCO's third annual report is available and recommended for review <https://www.oco.virginia.gov/reports>. Eric provided an overview of relevant bills and budget items from the 2025 General Assembly.
- The FACT Board previously approved funding to hiring a consultant to develop a framework for preventing child sexual abuse in Virginia. The report is completed and was accepted by the CAN Advisory Committee and is now available at <https://www.fact.virginia.gov/state-plan-for-child-sexual-abuse-prevention/>
- The Committee elected to emphasize the same three areas as the past two years for the upcoming Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) letter.
 - Continue monitoring child welfare workforce and hotline in Virginia in terms of its capacity to meet the needs of children and their families in cases of abuse and/or neglect.
 - Continue monitoring the implementation of Family First federal policy in Virginia. Emphasize the need to move forward in development of a new child welfare database system, currently called CWIS (Child Welfare Information System).
 - Continue hearing from the Department on the findings, recommendations, and policy decisions that come from Virginia's five regional child death review teams.
- **A motion to accept the recommendations for the three focus areas from the CAN Committee for the CAPTA report was made by Trustee Wescott. Trustee Roberts seconded.**

Grants Committee Report: Trustee Wescott provided the update.

- The Grants Committee met this morning to discuss future funding opportunities. As part of that discussion, they reviewed information the committee received from a stakeholder survey to get input on how FACT's funding could be most helpful. They will be meeting again virtually prior to the June Board meeting to finalize the recommendations.
- FACT has received five ad hoc requests.
 - The Greater Augusta Coalition Against Adult Abuse is requesting \$5,000 to cover lunch, supplies, speaker fees, and continuing education fees for their upcoming statewide training "Unmasking Adult Abuse, Leading the Way to Change"
 - Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance is requesting \$4,000 for food costs to support their statewide "Power of We" conference for preventionists and advocates.

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- Early Impact Virginia is requesting \$5,000 to cover speaker fees, materials, and resources for their "Together We Thrive: 2025 Virginia Home Visiting Conference."
- Virginia Victim Assistance Network is requesting \$5,000 to offset expenses of meals and training supplies for their statewide "Advocate Essentials Academy."
- Camp HOPE America Massanutten Mountains is requesting \$5,000 for their Camp HOPE initiative focused on youth who have experienced family violence. Funding would help cover the cost of the camp for youth and additional camp supplies.
- **A motion to approve all five of the ad hoc grant requests was made by Trustee Powell. Trustee Crowder seconded.**

Treasurer's Report: Executive Director Poulin provided the update for Trustee Hart.

- Executive Director Poulin reviewed financial reports, including a new report on Budget vs Actuals.
- Executive Director Poulin will be meeting with Wendy Goldberg, CPA to discuss an updated approach to review financials, business processes, and internal controls and report back to the Board.
- There was discussion around the need for an audit, which is not required, and how the funding may be better allocated at this time.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Wescott to allow funds allocated in this year's budget for an audit to be repurposed to support an internal financial review and recommendations for system improvements. Trustee Powell seconded.**

VDSS Report: Deputy Commissioner Ayers provided the update.

- Trustee Ayers provided information on his background working for local social services prior to moving to VDSS. He left VDSS to work nationally at the Casey Foundation with Pennsylvania and New Mexico before coming back to VDSS about three years ago.
- There was discussion on roadblocks that Trustee Ayers has identified in Family First implementation in Virginia. Virginia has a high turnover rate for employees within their first few years.
- Federal updates – currently the highest item of priority is the potential federal shutdown from the budget conversations this Friday. No big changes to VDSS would happen immediately. Services will continue to be provided as long as the shutdown doesn't last for a significant period of time. Due to the federal communication blackout, there has not been communication about any policy changes so far.
- Benefits updates –
 - The new Secretary of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversee the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and are planning to tackle child obesity by potentially changing the ability to purchase high sugar products for SNAP holders.
 - There is also a potential for new work requirements to be added for benefits. The new Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) leader has championed work requirements for Medicaid. The Youngkin administration has been working on strengthening work programs so the concept would not be new for Virginia.
 - Virginia has 2 million participants on Medicaid – added 500,000 since the pandemic. No new staff have been added to compensate for this increase. There are 900,000 individuals on SNAP. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is the only benefit that has returned to pre-pandemic numbers due to the ending of pandemic expansions and workforce requirements. The average TANF payout is \$280/month.
- HB2597 and SB937 would require correction action for an applicant for provisional licensure prior to any appeal of the provisional license issued to an assisted living facility or adult day care center. This would bring assisted living facilities in line with similar to VDH's oversight on nursing homes. These bills passed

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the General Assembly and are waiting on the Governor's potential signature. <https://lis.virginia.gov/bill-details/20251/HB2597> <https://lis.virginia.gov/bill-details/20251/SB937>

- There is a budget amendment to get 72 new local Child Protective Services positions statewide and five regional consultants. A 2022 report said CPS was over 1041 staff short.
- There was discussion on hotline staffing updates. The Governor's office removed the degree requirements from applications for the hotline. A Family Services Specialist, who provide child welfare services, is still required to have a degree and training on intake.

Child Advocacy Center Overview: Jeanine Harper, Executive Director for Greater Richmond SCAN provided the overview.

- Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) were started in the late 1980s and work on cases of child sexual abuse, physical abuse, child pornography, human trafficking, and child-on-child allegations. These cases involve multiple partners and various adults involved in needing to have discussions with the child. On average 6-8 people need to talk with the child throughout the investigation and not all are trained in handling/interviewing traumatized children. CACs coordinate the investigation, treatment, and prosecution of these cases to minimize re-traumatization of children throughout the process.
- What do CACs do?
 - If a report is made to CPS or law enforcement, they will do a basic safety assessment and then contact the CAC in their area to book a forensic interview.
 - Every center has a family advocate for non-offending caregivers that follow the family until the case closes.
 - Provide trauma focused treatments for free and are available for as long as the family or child needs them.
 - Convene a Multidisciplinary Team (MDTs) with various partners twice a month to discuss what is happening with the cases.
 - Provide trainings for MDT partners on various pieces of child abuse and prioritize the wellbeing of the partners to help build relationships.
- CACs have been the main organization involved in child-on-child allegations. FACT has supported this work through the Problematic Sexual Behavior Project. The current phase of the project is developing a train-the-trainer model for MDTs on how to handle these cases in their area.
- There are 19 CACs and 6 satellite locations in communities throughout Virginia. <https://www.cacva.org/>

Staff Report: Executive Director Poulin provided the update.

- There was acknowledgment of Trustees Keene, Coffey, Crowder, Powell and Lawrence that will have their terms ending after the next meeting, which will be held virtually.
- Developed a new Violence Prevention Spectrum page on the FACT Website to serve as resource and be incorporated into funding criteria for FACT and other state and local funders. <https://www.fact.virginia.gov/violence-prevention-spectrum/>
- Expanded the scope of the research brief previously focused on providing an analysis of regional, state and national efforts focused on child fatality review processes to include information on initial responses to child fatalities including those from Office of Medical Examiners, CPS and Law Enforcement. Also expanded access to data for that project to include Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) and Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS).
- Finalized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VCU's Partnership for People with Disabilities to begin implementing FACT's grant to support increasing implementation of the

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Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention (LEAP) program- an evidence-based training to prevent sexual assault against people with intellectual disabilities.

- Continued to oversee and support FACT's grant to Justice 3D to develop and implement a training for trainers' pilot program to improve how Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) respond to cases of problematic sexual behavior in children 12 and under. The training will be held in November.
- Joined the Virginia Funders Network (VFN)- a network of private and public grantmaking programs focused on increasing collaboration and learning.

Adjournment/Wrap up: The next Board meeting will be June 12th, 2025, held virtually. Chairperson Roberts concluded the meeting at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tarina Keene

Tarina Keene, Secretary

&

Taylor Hohle

Taylor Hohle, Senior Research Associate